

further comprises] and (v) separation means [(5)] between the flow matrix [(6)] and the liquid containers [(12, 13)], wherein said separation means [(5)] are mounted in a movable relationship with the liquid containers [to in] between a first position wherein the separation means are adapted to prevent liquid contact of the flow matrix [(6)] with the liquid containers [(12, 13)], and [in] a second position wherein the separation means are adapted to permit liquid receiving contact of the flow matrix [(6)] with the liquid containers [(12, 13)].

2. (Amended) The test device according to claim 1, [characterized in that] wherein the flow matrix [(6)] is flat and the liquid flow is lateral within said matrix.

3. (Amended) The test device according to claim 1 [or 2, characterized in that] wherein the flow matrix [(6)] is a membrane strip.

4. (Amended) The test device according to claim 2 [or 3, characterized in that said] wherein the liquid containers [(12, 13)] are mounted adjacent to a face of said flow matrix [(6)], and the separation means comprise a flat liquid-tight element [(5)] sandwiched between the liquid containers [(12, 13)] and the flow matrix [(6)].

5. (Amended) The test device according to [any one of claims 2 to 4, characterized in that]-claim 4, wherein the liquid-tight element [(5)] is at least partially removable from the housing [(1, 2)].

6. (Amended) The test device according to claim 5, [characterized in that] wherein the liquid-tight element [(5)] is a pull-out element[, e.g. a pull-out sheet or film].

7. (Amended) The test device according to [any one of claims 1 to 6, characterized in that] claim 1, wherein the liquid containers [(12, 13)] are mounted in a movable relationship with the flow matrix [(6)].

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8. (Amended) The test device according to [any one of claims 1 to 7, characterized in that said] claim 1, wherein the at least one liquid container for liquid other than sample liquid [comprise] comprises at least one container with flow liquid [(12), such as a buffer solution].

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9. (Amended) The test device according to claim 8, [characterized in that] wherein the liquid container or containers for flow liquid are in the form of an absorbent pad or sponge [(12)].

10. (Amended) The test device according to [any one of claims 1 to 9, characterized in that said] claim 1, wherein the at least one liquid container for liquid other than sample liquid [comprise] comprises a container for an analytically detectable reagent.

Claim 11, line 1, replace "characterized in that" with --wherein the--.

a²
12. (Amended) The device according to claim 10 [or 11, characterized in that] wherein the at least one liquid container for flow liquid is provided upstream and/or downstream of said container with analytically detectable reagent.

13. (Amended) The test device according to [any one of claims 1 to 9, characterized in that said] claim 1, wherein the flow matrix [(6)] comprises a zone having

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said analytically detectable reagent predeposited in the matrix or in an element [(8)] placed on the matrix.

Claim 14, line 1, replace "characterized in that" with --wherein--.

Claim 15, line 1, replace "characterized in that" with --wherein--.

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16. (Amended) The test device according to claim 13, [characterized in that] wherein a first container [(12)] for flow liquid extends both upstream of and at least partially above and along said zone with analytically detectable reagent.

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Claim 17, line 1, replace "characterized in that" with --wherein--

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18. (Amended) The test device according to claim 16 [or 17, characterized in that] wherein a barrier element [(11)] extends above said zone [(8)] with analytically detectable reagent to prevent direct contact between said first container [(12)] for flow liquid and the zone with analytically detectable reagent, when said separation means [(5)] is in said second position.

19. (Amended) The test device according to [any one of claims 1 to 18, characterized in that said] claim 1, wherein the capturing agent immobilized in the flow matrix [(6)] is a member of a specific binding pair and [that] wherein the other member of the specific binding pair is part of or coupled to a reagent capable of binding the analyte.

Claim 20, line 1, replace "characterized in that" with --wherein the--.

21. (Amended) The test device according to [any one of claims 10 to 20, characterized in that said] claim 10, wherein the analytically detectable reagent is labelled[, such as by a fluorophore or a chromophore].

22. (Amended) A method of performing an assay for determining an analyte in a sample, which method comprises flowing sample and assay liquids through a test device according to claim 1, wherein the sample and assay liquids flow through the flow matrix to reach [a] the [reaction] zone in said flow matrix in a predetermined sequence[, characterized in that a device according to any one of claims 1 to 21 is used to carry out the method].

23. (Amended) [Use of the device according to any one of claims 1 to 21] The method according to claim 22 for testing for an analyte indicating a disease selected from allergy, inflammation and autoimmune diseases.

24. (Amended) [The use according to claim 23,] The method according to claim 23 wherein the analyte is a specific immunoglobulin.

25. (Amended) A kit for conducting an assay method, which kit comprises the test device of [any one of claims 1 to 21] claim 1 in combination with at least one other assay [components] component.

Please add the following claims 26-28:

--26. (NEW) The test device of claim 5, wherein the liquid-tight element comprises a pull-out sheet or a film.--